

St. Meletios Galesiotes (†1286): Concerning the Customs of the Italians

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Introduction: St. Meletios Galesiotes lived from 1209–1286. He is known as Homologetes (the Confessor) because of his adamant resistance to the church union between Constantinople and Rome manufactured by Michael VIII Palaiologos at the Second "Council" of Lyons (1272–1274).

During the course of his ascetic struggles Christ appeared to the Saint and commanded him to go to Constantinople to defend the true Orthodox faith against false union. St. Meletios did so and compared the Emperor to Julian the Apostate and, like St. Maximus the

after his death his holy body remained incorrupt and became the source of many miracles.

Before this, between 1276 and 1280 he wrote a poem that was intended to present all of the essentials of the Orthodox faith in a single “gathering”. Below is a complete outline of this work of which only "Logos I" has been translated into English – being presented below. The divisions of this poem are as follows:

1. On the customs of the Italians.
2. On the procession of the Holy Spirit.
3. On the meaning of the formula: "the Spirit from the Son".
4. On the formula "from the Son" (ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ) when used by the Orthodox Fathers.
5. On the expression "Spirit of the Son" and on how the Spirit manifests itself.
6. On presumption as the primary cause of heresy and on the danger of ignorance of the Scriptures.
7. On azymes (unleavened bread in the eucharist).
8. On the danger of being in communion with heretics; therefore, on the danger of being in communion with Latins.
9. On those pastors who are responsible for today's heresies and evils (i.e. a denunciation of orthodox churchmen who support [this] church union).
10. That one must never be silent about the truth.

~Logos I: Concerning the Customs of the Italians~

1. The greatest and most terrible fault is the one in their teaching about God, that addition [the filioque] which they shamelessly dare to add to the revered Creed, contrary to sacred Scripture. This is the first and principal act of lawlessness among them, whence they earn Synodical anathema, removing themselves far from Orthodox people, for they were anathematized by the second Synod. Also, they have the later [Synods] which anathematize them and throw them out of the Church of Christ. For the later Synods agree with the earlier and you will find one harmony in all of them.

2. You should know their second evil is the offering of azymes which the sixty-second canon of the Apostles chases from the assembly of the faithful, condemning all those who accept this [offering] after the divine grace [i.e., after the Incarnation] on the grounds that they worship shadow and type.

And in the catechetical discourse, they are convicted of no small number of other errors; they [the authors of the discourse] also receive the anathema of those Armenians on the grounds that they offer azymes. For the anathema is addressed to all those who do not use leavened bread in the offerings, but rather sacrifice animals. For just as the terrible Apollinarios foolishly babbled that the body of the Lord was without a soul and without a mind, so also these [azymites] uphold the blasphemy in their deeds. What he accomplished with words, they accomplish with deeds.

Apostles and the eighth of the illustrious Synod in Sardica discipline those who engage in such wicked practices with excommunication and complete deposition. Again, another canon of the Apostles, the twentieth, deposes likewise all those who strike others, whether they dare to strike believers or unbelievers. In addition, the twenty-third canon of the Synod which met by divine grace in Ankyra says that everyone who commits involuntary homicides remains eight years in penance, even with respect to robbers, as the reverend Basil teaches when he explains well the canon of which we have been speaking.

For this [principle], on the one hand, [applies] among lay people. For matters of killing bring all priests to deposition, even if someone does this involuntarily. But the one who kills willingly, I do not know under what conditions he will pay a suitable penalty. And this is so even if in these matters the popes, the first among bishops, imitate the enemies of the Lord, show themselves to be admirers of those who killed Christ, commit murder, and bring about the death of both souls and bodies.

4. They like to fast often on Sabbaths, even if one of the great feasts happens to fall on the Sabbath; but the fifty-first canon of the Apostles, and also the sixty-first of them, and along with these absolutely all of the holy Synods, impose on them excommunication with deposition.

5. During Cheesefare Week, they eat meat even on Wednesday. They eat meat during the first week of the fasts. They do not observe the sacred forty days, and on account of these things the sixty-sixth canon of the divine Apostles sentences them to anathema.

things, the sixty-third [canon] of the divine Apostles imposes upon the Italians the weight of excommunication.

7. Priests abstain from lawful marriage, while they fearlessly fornicate, defile themselves with adulteries, and take mistresses openly and knowingly. Thus they fittingly incur the excommunication of the sixtieth and fifth apostolic canons. Again, the fourth canon of the Synod in Gangra anathematized likewise all those who do these things, should someone say that the priests come to the sacrifices offering their household affairs instead of offerings.

8. They associate with heretics, especially Armenians, for like, as they say, gathers with like and, according to the proverb, birds of a feather stick together. Also, in this regard, the tenth canon of the Apostles and the third canon of the Synod in Laodicea subject them to excommunication and deposition.

9. They baptize infants in one immersion; instead of oil they lawlessly use saliva in addition, they offer salt during baptism. And on account of these things the second Synod, as you know, and with it the one that came after it, as you well know, anathematized them as transgressors.

10. They were wholly ignorant of the presanctified. Thus the sixth Synod of God condemned them in its fifty-second canon, and the Synod after it was in harmony with it regarding these matters.

11. They form crosses in the churches on the surface of the earth and after they kiss these they then walk upon them. They make the holy icons into chairs and beds; like the children of Mani, they burn them

12. To those Gentiles who were about to convert, the Apostles forbade polluted things, strangled things, and fornication. But the Italians continue these things as if [such behavior were] lawful.

13. The place of the sacrifices is open, accessible to all. Among them, sacred things are not distinct from profane. Therefore the sixty-ninth canon of the sixth Ecumenical Synod considers them excommunicated, for it scarcely encourages entrance to the all-holy sanctuary even at the right time and then for the emperors alone.

14. Another canon in this Council, the fifty-fifth, if they do not do all things in accord with us — even the smallest thing — justly imposes upon them the weight of excommunication.

But now they have not even a remnant of piety, and why should I uselessly and vainly prolong the argument? For if someone were about to explain each of their customs — what sort of evils and illegitimacies each is filled with, what chastisement and what sort of condemnation each deserves — perhaps there would not be enough time for the narrative. Therefore, I leave off recording the canons which condemn them and which they transgress, and I touch synoptically upon only the chief matters and these very truly are few out of many.

15. They say «in one Lord of us», but not «of us all». For they reveal this when they have produced something in addition to us [i.e., the Filioque]. But if indeed they simply confess «one Lord», they have shown that they would leave «us all» out.

16. They do not call the Theotokos Theotokos.

paintings. But they have even the crucifixions sculpted, not drawn on a flat surface, and [thus] practice a barbaric custom.

18. In a single church they sacrifice three times in the same day, and indeed wherever they may happen to be they celebrate the liturgy fearlessly.

19. They make the sign [of the cross] crookedly, with the thumb, and they do not at all form the cross straight.

20. Their priests do purifications and aspersions remaining completely in the customs of the Jews.

21. Those who are convicted of errors, they anoint with oil for the remission of sins, for the forgiveness of errors.

22. From the fourth day of the revered first week [of Lent] until holy Pascha they do not say the Alleluia, for they consider Christ to be in the desert.

23. They hide the cross in those days, secreting it until Pascha comes. Then, when they have brought it forth as if from some grave, they make the invisible visible to all before it.

24. They say that the Divine should not be praised in any other tongue than that of the Italians, that of the Hellenes, and, with these two, that of the Hebrews.

25. The priests and the bishops wear stoles not of wool, but rather of silk.

26. During the awesome eucharistic celebration they converse fearlessly, they sit without fear, and they hardly rise or keep silence at

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27. They say, "Take, eat". But their celebrants present a kiss instead of the communion.

28. During Lent, they do not all fast equally, but some observe even more weeks than we do, as many as eight or more; others, on the other hand, observe only six weeks, fewer than we do.

29. In those [days], children eat eggs and cheese, and the weak eat meat, even if their illness is brief.

30. If a monk becomes a bishop he may often eat meat both if he is sick and if he is walking on the road. He eats pig's fat any time and any place.

31. They always eat meat on Wednesday, just as they eat eggs and cheese on Friday.

32. Again, on Pascha they sacrifice a lamb with unleavened bread, which the Hebrews do, just like the Armenians.

33. During the time when the very holy Virgin gave birth, if they find some icon of her in the churches, they take it far away, they throw it far off.

34. On Friday and on the Sabbath of the Holy Days, in the corners of the churches, in hidden places, they search for Christ with bare feet.

35. They leave their dead bishops unburied, observing eight days after their death. Then they bury them with their hands stretched out upon their thighs. They also close up all their senses with wax. What madness!

But in the other eight months they are utterly idle.

37. They take sisters of brothers-in-law as brides. They fearlessly commit incest; they perform illicit marriages.

38. They openly eat every unclean thing, even beavers. They do not have any discretion in these matters.

39. They say that all sinners receive purification in the purifying fire of Purgatory, and they learned this from the terrible Origen.

40. Very many others of the most barbaric customs they hold as if they were pious and follow as if they were laws. They do not take heed of the Synods, nor do they observe the canons. They do not accept the traditions of the holy fathers. They consider themselves, and themselves alone, to be everything.

They have cardinals instead of the Apostles and fill the place of the twelve [Apostles] with twelve [cardinals]. [They have] nine orders of monks as if they were the nine orders of angels [lit., incorporeal beings]. In addition, they propose both five patriarchs and an emperor greater than the other emperors, and under them counts, princes, and kings, as if these were all and everything were in these. Those who submit to them acquiesce in all these things. But we reject them, and likewise these [customs], guarding the holy traditions of the Fathers and observing the laws of our Church.







The Revolution has now entered the Orthodox Church!

The following presentation of the teachings of Fr. Seraphim Rose of blessed memory concern how the Bolshevik and Nihilist revolutions purposefully evolved from “atheism and open warfare against God” unto the presentation of a “new social-Christianity”: The Papist ...



Fr. Seraphim Rose: Comparing the Turkish and Soviet yoke

~Two excerpts from the letters of Fr. Seraphim Rose along with other vital insights concerning the Anti-Christianity of yesterday and today~ Excerpt 1: "There is no communion whatever between the Russian Church Abroad and any of the other [Russian] groups, and for very good re ...



The Antichrist cries out: keep your dogmas - just join us!

~A story from the Life of St. Valeriu Gafencu and followed by a vital commentary concerning its contemporary relevance~ The following is



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